

Black Looks, White Myths:

Race, Power and
Representation

Curators:

Octavio Zaya

Danielle Tilkin

Tumelo Mosaka

Participating Artists:

Wayne Barker (SA)

Willie Bester (SA)

Candice Breitz (SA)

Dvid Goldblatt (SA)

Federico Guzmán

Jennifer Gordon (SA)

Themba Hadebe (SA)

Steve Hilton-Barber (SA)

Fanie Jason (SA)

Alf Khumalo (SA)

Clement Lekanyane (SA)

Rashid Lombard (SA)

Rogelio López Cuenca

Motlalefi Mahlabe (SA)

Santu Mofokeng (SA)

Ruth Mothau (SA)

Juda Ngwenya (SA)

Cedric Nunn (SA)

Obie Oberholzer (SA)

Elena Del Rivero

Marta Sentis

Penelope Siopis (SA)

Guy Tillim (SA)

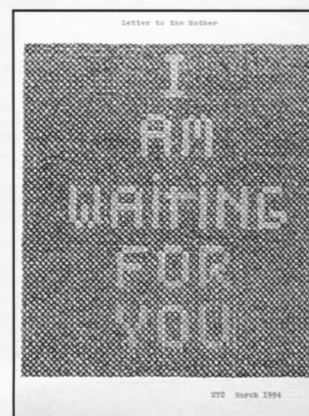
Gary van Wyk (SA)

Images we come across in our daily life, throughout education, media, entertainment, advertisements and the arts, define our time and shape our future. These images which supposedly represent us, also help to build our pride as much as our self-hate, our complexes as much as our self-esteem. We can say the way the others represent us moulds the way we see and represent ourselves, what is real to us and even the way we understand and imagine the world. For the vast majority of the people of South Africa, whom until recently, the white culture subjugated – and for those who resisted its control and regulations – representation is more complex and challenging. Not only because the pain and neutralisation which representations of black people and its culture caused to those seeking to create a sense of self, but also because of the need to overcome the destructive consequences of the ensuing erasure of black culture and the system that made it inevitable.

Between a culture of domination that demanded self-negation from all of its non-white citizens and the internalised rejection of blackness, its history and culture – that over-valued whiteness by understanding blackness only as a stamp for powerlessness and victimisation – black identity and self-determination have been in a constant state of crisis. In this context, images and representation have been a formidable tool of domination that invariably helped to construct, legitimate, promote and perpetuate a privileged institutionalised white culture. A culture with its built-in racism at the expense of the diversity and plurality of its subjects; a powerful tool that has been able to prevent awareness, self-sufficiency and resistance through the homogenisation of experience, thoughts and feelings.

Black Looks, White Myths tries to review the complex and provocative role of representation dealing with the multi-faceted experience of South Africa's recent history as seen through the eyes of black South African photographers, white South African photographers, and four artists from Spain. Together, these works contribute to a narrative of critical intervention and resistance to racist exploitation and control in the process of decolonizing our minds. They challenge once more, the already-debunked idea that photographs reflect accurately the reality that they capture – a sort of a neutral mirror of reality. The exhibition tries to present the multiple representations of that reality as cultural constructions that overlay the way we see.

Persuaded by the fact that recognizing the influence of domination is the first step to change, the exhibition, above all, provides an opportunity to question the configuration of power and reconsider the screen of signs inserted between the retina and the word – a screen consisting of all the discourses built into the social arena. It is as though we see caught up in a network that comes to us from the outside, the same way as in language: we function in systems that were there before we were; systems of visual discourse that saw the world before we did. It is entirely up to us whether these systems define us, or we define them. "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty told Alice "it means just what I choose it to mean ... neither more or less." When Alice asks whether he *could* make words mean so many different things, Humpty Dumpty replies "The question is, which is to be the master... that is all."



Elena del Rivero
Letter to the Mother, 1994,
oil on paper

Recent one artist exhibitions: 1987: October, First Individual Exhibition Hotel Ivoire, Abidjan.
1992: March, Second Individual Exhibition, Hotel Ivoire, Abidjan.

Name: **Petrona Morrison.**
Curator: Veerle Poupeye-Rammalaere.
Exhibition: *Contemporary Jamaican Visions.*
Born: Manchester, Jamaica.
Currently resident in: Kingston, Jamaica.
Training: 1976: BA Fine Arts, MacMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

Recent group exhibitions: 1986: MFA, Howard University, Washington, DC.
1994: "Home and Away", INIVA and October Gallery, London, UK.
1992: First Biennial of Caribbean and Central American Painting, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.
1991: "Aspects III: Eight Jamaican Avant Garde Artists", National Gallery of Jamaica, Kingston, Jamaica.

Recent one artist exhibitions: 1991: Makonde Gallery, Kingston, Jamaica.
1989: Babylon Jamaica Gallery, Kingston, Jamaica.
1983: Upstairs-Downstairs Gallery, Kingston, Jamaica.

Recent articles or books written on the artist's work: 1994: Exhibition catalogue, "Home and Away", London: INIVA and October Gallery, 1994 (with essays by Petrine Archer-Straw).
1991: Exhibition catalogue, "Aspects III: eight Jamaican Avant Garde Artists", Kingston National Gallery of Jamaica, 1991.

Name: **Sanah Mosia.**
Curator: Jean-Hubert Martin.
Born: Sternreis, South Africa, 1965.
Currently resident in: Slabberts, South Africa.

Name: **Ruth Seopedi Motau.**
Curator: Tumelo Mosaka and Octavio Zaya.
Exhibition: *Black Looks, White Myths: Race, Power and Representation.*
Born: Soweto, South Africa, 1968.
Currently resident in: Soweto, South Africa.
Training: 1990-92: The Market Photography Workshop.
1993: Weekly Mail & Guardian Cadetship.
Recent group exhibitions: 1994: "Photo Works by Women", South African Association of Arts, Cape Town, South Africa.
1993: "Women on Women's Day" Blooming Arts, Oxford, England.

Recent one artist exhibitions: 1994: "Ordinary People", Blooming Arts, Oxford, England.

Recent articles or books written on the artist's work: 1994: James Garner, "More than just PC" In *The Weekly Mail and Guardian*, September 16-22, 32.

Photographs by this artist have appeared in, inter alia: *Weekly Mail & Guardian*
City Press
French Cosmopolitan

Name:
Curator:
Exhibition:
Born:
Currently resident in:
Recent group exhibitions:

Name:
Curator:
Exhibition:

Name:
Curator:
Exhibition:
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Currently resident in:

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Curator:
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Currently resident in:
Training:

Recent group exhibitions:

Name:
Curator:
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Currently resident in:
Training:
Recent group exhibitions:

Name:
Curator:
Exhibition:
Born:
Currently resident in:
Training:
Recent group exhibitions:

Name:
Curator:

Rantefe Mothebe.
Gershom Sanga
Contemporary Botswana.
Botswana.
Gaborone, Botswana.
1985-93: Artists in Botswana.
1989-94: Thapona International Artists Workshop.
1993: Botswana Live, London, UK.
1993-94: Botswana Live, Toronto, Canada.
1994-95: Botswana Live, Chicago, USA.

Fabian Kamulu Mpagi.
Rose-Marie Rychner.
Peace and War.

Sipho Msweli.
Bart de Baere & Myeza.
Sipho Msweli and Michel Francois.
Stanger, South Africa.
Stanger, South Africa.

Mavis Mtandeki.
Emma Bedford.
Objects of Defiance / Spaces of Contemplation.
Cape Town, South Africa, 1947.
Cape Town, South Africa.
1990: Media Course, Community Arts Project (CAP).
1993: Diploma in Photography, Centre for Photographic Studies, Cape Town, South Africa.
1994: "Photo Works by Women", South African Association of Arts, Cape Town, South Africa.
1994: Side by Side, The Mayibuye Centre for History and Culture, University of the Western Cape, South Africa.
1993: Newport Gallery, London.
1990: The Way we Live, Community Arts Project, Cape Town, South Africa.

Boira Mteki.
Doreen Sibanda.
Towards an Integrative Source
Zimbabwe.
Harare, Zimbabwe.
Canon Paterson Arts Centre, Harare.
1993: Zimbabwe Heritage Ngz, Zimbabwe.

Simon Mthimkhulu.
Margot Amoils and Kim Berman.
Volatile Alliances: International Print Exchange and Installation for the Africus Biennale.
Alberton, South Africa.
Dube, Soweto, South Africa.
1994: Funda Centre, African Institute of Student Artists, Artist Proof Studio.
1993: Momentum.
1991: Standard Bank.
1989: Operation Hunger.

Peter Mtombeni.
Chani Collet.